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Acceptability and Feasibility of Physical Activity Assessment Methods

March 31, 2015



A collaborative study led by Dr. Yelena Tarasenko, assistant professor of epidemiology and health policy and management at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University examines [Acceptability and Feasibility of Physical Activity Assessment Methods for an Appalachian Population](#). Nowhere is improving understanding and accurate assessment of physical activity more important for disease prevention and health promotion than among health disparities populations such as those residing in rural and Appalachian regions. To enhance accurate assessment of physical activity and potentially improve intervention capacity, we conducted a mixed-methods study examining the acceptability and feasibility of self-report physical activity questionnaires, pedometers, and accelerometers among rural Appalachian children, adolescents, and adults. Most participants reported positive experiences with all three physical activity assessment tools.

Several acceptability ratings differed by age group and by sex within each age group. With very few exceptions, no significant differences in acceptability were found by race, education, employment status, health status, BMI categories, income levels, or insurance status within age groups or overall. Several factors may impact the choice of the physical activity assessment method, including target population age, equipment cost, researcher burden, and potential influence on physical activity levels. Children and adolescents appear to have more constraints on when they can wear pedometers and accelerometers. While pedometers are inexpensive and convenient, they may influence physical activity levels, rather than simply measure them. Accelerometers, while less influential on behavior, consume extensive resources, including high purchase costs and researcher burden.

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